

# Understanding an Adversary's Strategic and Operational Calculus: A Late Cold War Case Study with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Applicability

U.S. Views on Soviet Navy Strategy and Operations

Peter M. Swartz

with contributions by Michael Connell, Ph.D.



COP-2013-U-005622-Final  
August 2013

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>AUG 2013</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2013 to 00-00-2013</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Understanding an Adversary's Strategic and Operational Calculus: A Late Cold War Case Study with 21st Century Applicability U.S. Views on Soviet Navy Strategy and Operations</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>CNA Analysis &amp; Solutions, 4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA, 22311</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>64</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

Strategic Studies is a division of CNA. This directorate conducts analyses of security policy, regional analyses, studies of political-military issues, and strategy and force assessments. CNA Strategic Studies is part of the global community of strategic studies institutes and in fact collaborates with many of them.

On the ground experience is a hallmark of our regional work. Our specialists combine in-country experience, language skills, and the use of local primary-source data to produce empirically based work. All of our analysts have advanced degrees, and virtually all have lived and worked abroad.

Similarly, our strategists and military/naval operations experts have either active duty experience or have served as field analysts with operating Navy and Marine Corps commands. They are skilled at anticipating the “problem after next” as well as determining measures of effectiveness to assess ongoing initiatives. A particular strength is bringing empirical methods to the evaluation of peace-time engagement and shaping activities.

The Strategic Studies Division’s charter is global. In particular, our analysts have proven expertise in the following areas:

- The full range of Asian security issues
- The full range of Middle East related security issues, especially Iran and the Arabian Gulf
- Maritime strategy
- Insurgency and stabilization
- Future national security environment and forces
- European security issues, especially the Mediterranean littoral
- West Africa, especially the Gulf of Guinea
- Latin America
- The world’s most important navies
- Deterrence, arms control, missile defense and WMD proliferation

The Strategic Studies Division is led by Vice President and Director, Dr. Eric V. Thompson, who is available at 703-824-2243 and on e-mail at [thompsoe@cna.org](mailto:thompsoe@cna.org).

Photo credit line: Soviet *Typhoon* strategic ballistic missile submarine. Soviet Military Power 1988 (U.S. Department of Defense, 1988).

The author is grateful to reviewers Dr. Eugene Cobble, Dr. Michael Connell, and Mr. Ken Gause for significant contributions to this report.

Approved for distribution:

August 2013



Mr. Ken E. Gause  
Director, International Affairs Group  
CNA Strategic Studies

This document contains the best opinion of the authors at the time of issue.  
Cleared for public release, distribution unlimited.

#### **Copyright © 2013 CNA**

This work was created in the performance of Federal Government Contract Number N00014-11-D-0323. Any copyright in this work is subject to the Government's Unlimited Rights license as defined in DFARS 252.227-7013 and/or DFARS 252.227-7014. The reproduction of this work for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. Nongovernmental users may copy and distribute this document in any medium, either commercially or noncommercially, provided that this copyright notice is reproduced in all copies. Nongovernmental users may not use technical measures to obstruct or control the reading or further copying of the copies they make or distribute. Nongovernmental users may not accept compensation of any manner in exchange for copies. All other rights reserved.

# Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Premise .....	3
Purpose.....	4
Approach.....	4
Some caveats .....	6
<b>The Soviet Navy case study.....</b>	<b>7</b>
The Soviet Navy and U.S. maritime strategy in the 1980s .....	7
<b>John Hattendorf on “Thinking about the Soviet Navy, 1967-1981” .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction .....	9
The work of the Center for Naval Analyses, 1967–1981 .....	10
The development of thinking within the Intelligence Community .....	17
<b>Christopher Ford and David Rosenberg on ‘High OPINTEL’ in the Era of the ‘Maritime Strategy’ .....</b>	<b>27</b>
A Revolution in understanding the Soviet adversary .....	27
A new view emerges.....	29
Evaluating the new intelligence and its implications .....	32
Selling the new ideas and changing the Navy.....	33
Operator/intelligencer trust and credibility .....	34
Validation through war gaming .....	35
Perception management: Provocation or deterrence? .....	35
<b>“Literary intelligence”: Approach and methodology .....</b>	<b>37</b>
CNA’s approach .....	37
CNA’s methodology .....	38
Sources .....	40
The disinformation issue .....	40
<b>Lessons drawn from the narratives.....</b>	<b>43</b>
On understanding the adversary .....	43

On using sources .....	44
On integration .....	45
On analysis and war gaming .....	46
On impediments.....	47
On change.....	47
On exploitation .....	48
An example: 21 <sup>st</sup> -century Iran.....	48
Differences between the two cases.....	48
Similarities between the two cases .....	48
<b>Appendix: An example of the range of Soviet open source</b>	
<b>citations by CNA analysts.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>57</b>

## Executive summary

It is difficult to understand the strategic and operational calculus of 21<sup>st</sup> century adversaries(e.g.: Iran). We can, however, gain insights that will help us understand that calculus by examining similar cases from the past.

One such case is the evolution in the U.S. understanding of the Soviet Union's strategic and operational calculus regarding the wartime employment of its navy, during the last half of the Cold War. In this case, civilians supporting the U.S. Navy in the 1970s analyzed a wide range of Soviet doctrinal publications and came to firm conclusions as to what the Soviet Union's strategic and operational priorities and choices would be in the event of war and naval operations against the West. These conclusions were long discounted by the U.S. naval intelligence community and U.S. Navy operators until they were eventually corroborated by other credible but extremely sensitive sources, in a series of dramatic intelligence breakthroughs in the late 1970s.

As a result of this new, drastically improved, but very different understanding of the Soviet naval strategic and operational calculus, U.S. and allied naval plans and priorities at the strategic and operational levels of war were re-tooled.

This paper examines that case study, and then draws a series of conclusions, observations, and recommendations from that examination:

- On understanding the adversary
- On using sources
- On integration

- On analysis and war gaming
- On impediments
- On change
- On exploitation
- On applicability to 21<sup>st</sup>-century Iran.

# Introduction

## Premise

Insights into the strategic and operational calculus of a 21<sup>st</sup> century adversary – like Iran – can be gained by examining similar cases. One such case is the evolution in the U.S. understanding of the Soviet Union’s strategic and operational calculus regarding the wartime employment of its navy during the last two decades of the Cold War. In this case, civilians supporting the U.S. Navy in the 1970s analyzed a wide range of Soviet doctrinal publications and came to firm conclusions as to what the Soviet Union’s strategic and operational priorities and choices would be in the event of war and naval operations against the West. These conclusions were long discounted by the U.S. naval intelligence community and U.S. Navy operators until they were eventually corroborated by other credible but extremely sensitive sources, in a series of dramatic intelligence breakthroughs in the late 1970s.

As a result of this new drastically improved but very different understanding of the Soviet naval strategic and operational calculus, U.S. and allied naval plans and priorities at the strategic and operational levels of war were re-tooled in a plethora of ways that we now style “the Maritime Strategy” of the 1980s.

For example, it had long been a NATO article of faith that the Soviet Union’s top-priority naval mission was to break the sea lines of communications (SLOCs) between the United States and its forces and allies in Europe. The new understanding of the Soviet strategic and operational calculus led the United States and its allies to understand that actual Soviet operational naval priorities were to protect the Soviet strategic nuclear submarine (SSBN) force and to support the operations of the Soviet ground forces. It also led them to drill down further, to expose the operations, mind-sets, and tactics that would characterize Soviet combat decisions when implementing those priorities.

## Purpose

This paper analyzes, as a case study, the Reagan administration's Maritime Strategy of the 1980s, which was principally aimed at the Soviet Union. This analysis will help national security decision-makers and their staffs become aware of

- the range of methods that can be used to understand an adversary's strategic and operational calculus; and
- the uses to which such an understanding can be put.

The case study briefly describes the Maritime Strategy, but devotes much more attention to analyzing

- the efforts made by the U.S. intelligence and analytic communities of the 1970s and 1980s to divine Soviet intentions and link them to known and conjectured Soviet capabilities; and
- the efforts made by decision-makers and their staffs to assimilate the products of their intelligence officers and analysts so as to inform – and change – U.S. military plans, programs, and operations.

The case study is designed to be applicable to analyzing the strategic and operational calculus of 21<sup>st</sup>-century U.S. adversaries, like Iran.

## Approach

Now that there is a vast body of open literature on the Maritime Strategy, including its intelligence aspects, we can address the subject in an unclassified paper. Thus, we can disseminate the paper within the U.S. national security community, enhancing its utility.

Two authoritative sources in particular treat the subject of this paper in some detail:

- John B. Hattendorf, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*, Newport Paper Number 19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), especially Chapter II, "Thinking about the Soviet Navy, 1967-1981," pp. 23-36.
- Christopher Ford and David Rosenberg, *The Admiral's Advantage: U.S. Navy Operational Intelligence in World War II and*

*the Cold War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), especially Chapter V, ‘High OPINTEL’ in the Era of the ‘Maritime Strategy’,” pp. 77-108 (also published in an abridged version as “The Naval Intelligence Underpinnings of Reagan’s Maritime Strategy,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (April 2005): 379-409.)

The Hattendorf chapter (verbatim) and significant extracts from the Rosenberg and Ford chapter form the bulk of the detailed narrative of this paper. Dr. Hattendorf and Dr. Rosenberg are arguably the pre-eminent scholars and analysts of U.S. naval history alive today, and Dr. Ford is a distinguished national security analyst.<sup>1</sup> Given the sound quality of their original data and analysis – and that they have previously been cleared for publication by the intelligence community – there is no need to “re-invent the wheel” and rewrite them.

Using the Hattendorf and Ford/Rosenberg efforts as principal sources, this paper highlights and extracts their key findings, and presents them to decision-makers and their staffs in clear, summary fashion, for consideration and use.<sup>2</sup>

**Readers wishing to “cut to the chase” can turn immediately to the last chapter. In doing so, however, they will be skipping over the data and analyses from which the conclusions and recommendations in that chapter are derived.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hattendorf holds the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History at the Naval War College. Dr. Rosenberg has held the Harry W. Hill Chair of Maritime Strategy at the National War College. He has served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve (until his retirement as a captain), and is now a senior intelligence analyst at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA). Dr. Ford is a former Rhodes Scholar who has served in the White House and the State Department, and was a U.S. Naval Reserve intelligence officer. He is currently the Minority Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations.

<sup>2</sup> For an authoritative third narrative that tracks with the Hattendorf and Rosenberg findings, see Jan Breemer, “US Maritime Strategy: A Re-Appraisal,” *Naval Forces* (1987/II): 64-76.

## Some caveats

It is recognized that no two case studies will be the same. The case study just described —the development of Reagan’s Maritime Strategy, through an understanding of the Soviet Union —may well have had unique characteristics that will reduce its applicability to current and future situations, including that of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Iran. The following are among those characteristics that may prove significant:

- The Soviet way of war – including at sea —was doctrine based. Their doctrine meant a great deal to them: they wrote it down, and there was a lot of it. **Other adversaries may not be as wedded to doctrine.**
- A significant community of civilian specialists, with strong linguistic, research and analytic skills, existed outside the U.S. Navy but in a very close relationship with it. **Such communities may not exist for other adversaries.**
- U.S. Navy OPINTEL practices had already forged strong bonds and integration between Navy intelligence officers and operators. **These bonds and integration may not be as strong in some U.S. services and joint commands today.**
- Eventual deep penetration of the adversary provided confirmation of analyses of documents. **Such corroboration may prove lacking regarding other adversaries, including 21<sup>st</sup>-century Iran.**

# The Soviet Navy case study

## The Soviet Navy and U.S. maritime strategy in the 1980s<sup>3</sup>

The Reagan administration's Maritime Strategy of the 1980s endeavored to apply U.S. and allied naval power against the Soviet adversary's vulnerabilities at sea and on its maritime flanks, so as to make a decisive difference in deterring and defending against Soviet military attacks on the United States and its allies.

Elements of the Maritime Strategy against the Soviets included:

- An **acquisition strategy** of rapidly building up U.S. naval forces against Soviet forces, including achievement of a "600-ship navy"
- A **deployment strategy** of permanent U.S. Navy combat-credible forward presence in the Mediterranean, the Western Pacific and – increasingly – the Arabian Sea, backed by high-visibility surges of combat-credible U.S. naval forces to the Northeast Atlantic, the Arctic, and other ocean areas, including aggressive periodic forward exercising in seas adjacent to exposed U.S. allies and to the USSR, and intensive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations against Soviet naval forces

---

<sup>3</sup> There is a voluminous body of literature on the Maritime Strategy. For an introduction, see John B. Hattendorf, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*, Newport Paper Number 19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004); Peter M. Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1981-1990): Strategy, Policy, Concept and Vision Documents*, MISC D0026415.A1/Final (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011); and idem. *The U.S. Navy in the World (1981-1990): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*, MISC D0026419.A1/Final (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011).

- An oft-repeated **declaratory strategy** – promulgated at a variety of classification levels – laying out the ends, ways, and means of the strategy to deter and defeat the Soviet Union and its armed forces, especially its navy, including explicitly targeting Moscow’s strategic missile submarines.<sup>4</sup>

Given the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact at the end of the decade, the U.S. Maritime Strategy was never implemented, and there is no record of an actual **employment strategy** to be discussed and analyzed.

**The U.S. Maritime Strategy represents one of the rare instances in history when intelligence on an adversary helped lead a nation to completely revise its concept of military operations. Hence, it is the important to analyze the crucial role that U.S. analysis of the Soviet strategic and operational calculus played in developing the late Cold War Maritime Strategy.**

---

<sup>4</sup> For the texts of the various official unclassified and Secret texts of the Maritime Strategy, see John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz (eds.), *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, Newport Paper Number 33 (Newport RI: Naval War College Press, 2008).

# John Hattendorf on “Thinking about the Soviet Navy, 1967-1981”

This chapter reprints Chapter II of John B. Hattendorf, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*, Newport Paper #19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), pp. 23-36. Endnotes have been deleted. **Bolding is not in the original. It is used here to draw attention to sections of particular potential interest to decision-makers and their staffs.**

## [Introduction]

**Any serious thinking about strategy must necessarily deal with the effect that the use of one's own forces has on an opponent. Moreover, how an enemy uses his forces is a critical factor in any strategic evaluation. Thus, when thinking about how one might employ one's own forces for achieving broad future goals in a war, one must also assess the probability of how an enemy might act or react, as well as examine everything that an enemy can do that may materially influence one's own courses of action.**

From the early 1960s, when the growth of Soviet naval power became evident, the predominant view in America was that the Soviets were building a naval force with many capabilities similar to the United States Navy. Most importantly, the existence of a blue-water Soviet Navy seemed to emphasize, in American minds, the capability for peacetime power projection, the facility for wartime attack on U.S. and Western naval forces and sea lines of communication, as well as the ability to launch strategic nuclear strikes from the sea. Increasingly, Americans worried about the Soviet Navy as a sea denial force that could deprive the West of the free use of the sea, thereby creating political, economic, and military disaster. **In short, Americans tended to view the new Soviet naval capabilities in terms of mirror-imaging and refighting World War II.**

**The public discussion of the issue in Congress and the press as well as in the statements of senior naval officers stressed this**

interpretation. Simultaneously, however, there began to develop slowly an interpretation that attempted to move away from an ethnocentric view of the Soviets in American terms and rather toward an interpretation in Soviet terms on the basis of the Soviet Union's values and the views, aims, and objectives of its leaders. The first widely read book in America on this subject was Robert W. Herrick's *Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice*, published by the U.S. Naval Institute in 1968. Herrick wrote much of the book while serving as staff intelligence officer at the Naval War College in 1963–1964, basing it on his own detailed reading of Soviet literature and his nearly 20 years of experience as an intelligence specialist in Soviet affairs. **Herrick concluded that Soviet naval strategy, like Tsarist Russian naval strategy before it, was essentially defensive. This view was so greatly at variance with the commonly held official viewpoint,** that the publisher added a preface to the volume and enclosed a printed bookmark which drew attention to this fact, calling for comments and articles expressing alternative views for publication in the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings*.

**It took a rather long time for a different attitude and interpretation to prevail within the U.S. Navy. This change did occur, however,** at about the same time that the Maritime Strategy was being formulated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. **The process by which the U.S. Navy changed its views can be seen most clearly in two places: on one hand in the work of the Center for Naval Analyses in the period 1967–1981, and on the other, within the naval intelligence community.**

## **The work of the Center for Naval Analyses, 1967–1981**

The conclusions that The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) reached in its studies of Soviet naval strategy have often been at the center of the debate over Soviet intentions. **Using a great deal of unclassified evidence, the bulk of which came from Soviet doctrinal writings supported by interpretations of Soviet exercises, deployments, and general capabilities, CNA developed a broad interpretation. It emphasized the primarily defensive role of the Soviet Navy in protecting its SSBNs as the Soviet Union's (USSR) reserve of strategic nuclear weapons. This conclusion was a controversial one which has not always sat easily with the intelligence community, but it is one which lies at the basis of The Maritime Strategy.**

As early as 1968, Robert Weinland pointed out that the Soviets might feel that their submarine nuclear deterrent would be threatened by a U.S. campaign to defend its sealines of communication, even if the United States did not intend to attack the Soviet SSBN force. If the Soviet SSBNs were in the same immediate area as that used for Western sea lines of communication, the Soviet SSBNs ran the risk of becoming accidental or intentional victims of the conflict. If they withdrew to port or other safe areas, they might well compromise their own invulnerability and strike capability.

In mid-1973, Bradford Dismukes cited evidence that the Soviets were increasingly concerned about the security of their SSBN force, pointing out that maintenance of SSBNs on station would be more important than attacking Western sea lines of communication. The linkage in the strategic situation between Western defense of its sea lines and Soviet SSBN security was the result of geographical and technological factors that are outside the immediate control of either side. Asking for a basic change in U.S. thinking, Dismukes wrote in 1973, "At the least, we should include pro- and anti-SSBN scenarios in our general purpose force planning or run the risk of structuring a force which might be ill-suited to the most important war-fighting tasks it may be called on to carry out."

In 1972–1973, a series of eleven articles were published in *The Soviet Navy Journal* under the name of the navy's commander in chief, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov. The article bore the characteristic earmarks of new naval doctrine. CNA's work in analyzing these articles drew praise from the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral E. F. Rectanus, U.S. Navy, and at the same time a request for further assistance from CNA.

The result of Rectanus's request was a CNA draft to support preparation of the navy's input to a new National Intelligence Estimate on the Soviet Union (NIE-11-15-75). Prepared by members of the Institute for Naval Studies, comprised of Robert G. Weinland, James M. McConnell, and Bradford Dismukes, the CNA draft was a broad analysis that pointed out the significant changes in Soviet thinking, including "the apparent adoption of a strategic 'fleet in being' concept for at least a portion of their SSBN force."

The unclassified Gorshkov series was an important source that seemed to reveal much about Soviet Naval thinking, but it was not easy to interpret. James M. McConnell, in a study prepared for the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-96) and the Office of Naval Research, listed what he considered to be the main points in what he called “Gorshkov’s doctrine of coercive naval diplomacy.”

- The USSR is not only a formidable continental power but also a “mighty sea power.”
- The importance of combat at sea in the “overall course of war” has grown, although Gorshkov avoids references to the role of the navy in “decisively defeating” the enemy.
- In war, navies are a powerful means of achieving the “political goals” for the armed struggle.
- The importance of fleets-in-being at the close of wars to influence the peace negotiations and achieve political goals is repeatedly emphasized through historical examples.

Gorshkov specifically endorses Jellicoe’s strategy of holding back his forces at the battle of Jutland in World War I, thereby reversing previous Soviet naval historiography in its condemnation of the British Admiralty’s “politico-strategic” rather than “military strategic” approach to war, its “fleet-in-being” method, its “doctrine of conserving forces,” and consequent reluctance to risk the main forces of the fleet in a “decisive clash” to achieve “complete victory,” preferring instead to retain them “as an important factor at the moment of concluding peace and also for the postwar rivalry with erstwhile allies.” In World War II, although “military-geographic” conditions facilitated the British blockade, the Germans were successful, through diversion, in scattering British ASW forces throughout the Atlantic, creating a favorable situation for German naval operations “in the coastal waters of northern Europe.”

- **Due, apparently, mainly to “military-geographic” conditions, Russian requirements for naval forces have differed from those of the West.**
- Although the USSR gives priority to submarines, they require air and surface support to ensure combat stability.

- ASW is not very cost-effective against modern nuclear submarines, especially if the latter are supported by aviation and surface ships.
- SSBNs are “more effective in deterrence” than land-based launch facilities, because of their “great survivability.” This claim, made for the first time, occurs in a passage in which Gorshkov, if we are to take him literally, is treating “deterrence” as a “role in modern war.” Elsewhere, when the discussion turns, explicitly or contextually, to deterrence “in peacetime,” Gorshkov follows the traditional formula of coupling the Strategic Rocket Troops and the navy, in that order, as the main factors in demonstrating resolve.
- The very first duty of the navy is to maintain a high state of “readiness” to carry out the mission of “defending” the USSR against possible attacks from the sea.
- **This “defense” mission is the “main task” for the navy, with the implication that “deterrence and offsetting politico-military pressure is the main component of “defense.”**
- Navies fulfill the important role of one of the instruments of state policy in “peacetime,” including the protection of its “state interests” in the seas and oceans.
- Tasks associated with protecting these state interests are “especially important” because of the many “local wars” that imperialism “leave behind in the wake of its policy.”
- Because of the “truly inexhaustible wealth” of the seas, they have become objects of contending “state interest”; and navies “cannot take a back seat in this struggle.”

In addition to the Gorshkov series, note was also taken of points made by other Soviet naval specialists:

- **SSBNs specifically (and not just “submarines”) are incapable of realizing their full potential “without appropriate support from their forces.”**
- When the long-range Trident comes into operation in the U.S. Navy, SSBNs will be positioned in U.S. coastal waters, permit-

ting the allocation of a “new function” to the main U.S. ASW forces—“guarding the strategic missile forces.”

By the end of 1974, the most controversial conclusion arising from analysis of the Gorshkov series, along with other evidence, concerned Soviet plans for the use of their SSBN force during a crisis. Everyone involved with the analysis of this problem agreed that it was a matter of inference from defective or presumptive evidence. The points could not be found explicitly in Gorshkov’s writings, but the analysts made interpretations from what they saw as “latent content.” At CNA, analysts believed that the Soviets would elect to use their *Kiev*-class ship with its capacity for aircraft operations and to employ her with other general purpose forces to protect their SSBNs. This was a centrally important task because the Soviets intended to withhold their submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force during the conventional stage of a war and during initial nuclear strikes in order to provide either a second strike capability or to retain a bargaining chip during negotiations.

Elaborating on this point, CNA analysts concluded in a draft “Study of Grand Soviet Maritime Strategy” . . . :

It is likely that the Soviets intend to allocate some general purpose forces to the protection of SSBNs during the opening stages of a NATO–Warsaw Pact war. This priority would remain relatively high even if the war became prolonged. Only in the event of a clearly non-escalatory situation would pro-SSBN forces be reassigned to alternative missions.

**CNA’s conclusions were quite different from those made at that time in the classified intelligence literature.** While OP-60N endorsed the CNA conclusion, they were obliged to add qualifying language such as “this is an area about which we know little,” anticipating intelligence community objections.

Continuing this work in the following years, CNA analyst James M. McConnell made a crucial contribution in 1977 in a draft, first chapter of *Soviet Naval Diplomacy*, which corroborated earlier interpretations of Soviet intentions to withhold their SLBMs. Developing evidence that the Soviet Union’s SSBNs were under the direct control of the highest political leaders, and those forces would be used mainly in later periods of a war, McConnell wrote, “Wars

might be won by other branches of the armed forces, Gorshkov seems to be saying, but surrenders and armistices are arranged from the sea; and beyond that, navies have a value in influencing the course of actual peacemaking.”

In an October 1977 contribution to James L. George’s volume, *Problems of Sea Power as We Approach the Twenty-First Century*, McConnell went further and suggested that Soviet SSBNs would operate in defended, local sanctuaries in home waters, such as the Barents Sea for the Northern Fleet and the Sea of Okhotsk for the Pacific Ocean Fleet. These sanctuaries would be heavily guarded by mines and fixed underwater acoustic surveillance systems with the air defense and introspective cover for submarines, surface ships, and aircraft engaged in barrier operation.

Looking to what the Soviets might do in a future war, McConnell wrote:

I would not expect substantial forward deployments of platforms during the conventional phase of the war. Leaving aside escalation sensitivity, the counter-ASW environment would not be favorable and—given a perceived withholding strategy for the United States Navy to prosecute strategic ASW immediately upon entering the nuclear phase—these factors may explain Admiral Gorshkov’s insistence that sea control is necessary for strategic defense as well as strategic offense.

**Throughout the late 1970s, CNA analysts expressed growing concern that U.S. Navy plans were giving insufficient attention to the implications of Soviet adoption of a withholding strategy for their SLBM force and the assignment of their general purpose navy to a protective mission for their SSBN force. In March 1980, Bradford Dismukes reported the results of an initial investigation on the war termination mission of the U.S. Navy.** This new topic arose from an attempt to assess the implication of the Soviet withholding strategy. In a briefing that reflected seminal ideas by James McConnell, Dismukes declared that “our nation’s strategies require adjustment in reaction to a fundamental change that has occurred in maritime affairs.” The change that Dismukes saw was the emphasis that the Soviet Union put on the positive use of the sea for operating a strategic reserve of SSBNs and where security, in turn, was guaranteed by general purpose, Soviet naval forces. **“If the U.S. Navy is to carry out its**

primary functions in deterrence, escalation control, and war fighting,” Dismukes said, “it must attack Soviet strategy as effectively as Soviet weapons.” Dismukes suggested three areas that needed changes in the U.S. Navy. First, the further development of the U.S. Navy’s capabilities to fight a sea-control campaign with conventional weapons in the context of a campaign involving all our forces against the Soviet nuclear-reserve SSBNs. Secondly, the U.S. Navy needed long-range, stand-off ASW weapons that would effectively enhance, in Soviet areas, the deterrent effect of the U.S. Navy’s general purpose forces. Thirdly, **the U.S. Navy must reevaluate its doctrines to take account of the Soviet nuclear reserve.**

“What we’re dealing with here is the capacity to deprive our opponent of his perceived requirement to answer last in the war,” Dismukes said. While careful to point out that this strategy was not without risk, it might still be critical to have the option to use it if **Soviet ground forces occupy Europe.** A secure Soviet strategic reserve would ensure their dominance, but a threatened or insecure reserve would put them in a weaker position.

Up until early 1981, CNA continued its role in the interpretation of Soviet intentions and its follow-on work in developing a naval strategy for the United States that could be used to attack Soviet strategy. In March 1981, as a part of a planned joint Naval War College–CNA investigation, CNA prepared an initial estimate of the Soviets’ probable response to a U.S. campaign against their SSBN reserve. At this time, however, the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations began to be concerned that for CNA to participate further, its analysts would begin handling intelligence material that could not be released to private contractors and analysts. Several intelligence collection efforts had begun to pay off, and because of the sensitivity of the sources, new classifications of “sensitive compartmented information” (SCI) were created; this information would be withheld in the future, available only to a small group of intelligence analysts and senior flag officers, not CNA or the navy at large.

There had always been a tension between CNA and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) over differing interpretations, but this had often been regarded as a healthy and constructive difference of viewpoint. CNA analysts regretted that an exchange of views could no

longer take place on the same terms, but CNA analysts Dismukes and McConnell continued their work after 1981 by assessing Soviet strategic responses to an anti-SSBN campaign. Some of this later work was commissioned by OpNav and ONI, but was not based on compartmented information. From 1981, the Office of Naval Intelligence carried out its own assessments based on this information dealing with Soviet naval force employment plans.

## The development of thinking within the Intelligence Community

In the mid-1970s, the naval intelligence community felt secure in its view of the Soviet Navy. The prevailing wisdom explained the continuing Soviet naval buildup in terms of threats to Western sea lines of communication. Soviet exercises such as *OKEAN 1970* and *OKEAN 1975* seemed to emphasize the correctness of the interpretation that the Soviets thought primarily in terms of naval presence and in cutting Western sea lines. From this, American naval officers drew the conclusion that if war with the Soviet Union came, it would bring with it a battle of the North Atlantic and Northwest Pacific sea-lanes. By 1977–1979 however, the points that CNA was making paralleled evidence that the Intelligence community had already noticed suggesting that the Soviets did not seem to have made the typical preparation one would expect for a war on Western sea-lanes, in terms of their command and control arrangements, standby reserves, etc. Most importantly, the publication of the revised 1976 edition of Gorshkov's *Sea Power of the State* suggested clearly that the Soviets had a different set of priorities.

In May 1977, CNA submitted to ONI a draft of its study by James M. McConnell, *Soviet Naval Diplomacy*, requesting that ONI review it and approve it for publication in an unclassified form. The main focus of the work was on Soviet peacetime, power projection, but chapter 1 was an essay dealing with Soviet naval wartime strategy and force employment concepts which did not agree with the official navy position on how the Soviets would rationally employ their navy. In particular, the chapter discussed the Soviet concept of withholding SSBNs as a strategic reserve force in protected bastions. McConnell's work was based on an analysis of Soviet military and academic

writings which were unfamiliar to the naval officers in the Estimates Branch of ONI.

**In response to this new material from CNA, ONI put together a special group of officers to evaluate McConnell's chapter.** The group that was selected to do this had previously been given the task of analyzing the Gorshkov book, and consisted of ONI analyst[s]. . . **Since the idea was new to them, they undertook the task of locating and reading all the recurrences that McConnell had used. This opened up an entirely new body of literature that had been previously little known and unexploited by naval intelligence. However, in the process of this investigation, the ONI group came to the conclusion that McConnell's work showed a pattern of misquotes, exaggerations, and unwarranted interpretations. Therefore, the group recommended to the Director of Naval Intelligence that the chapter containing McConnell's analysis on the Soviet concept of withholding SSBNs be deleted prior to ONI approval for publication. In 1979, discussions between CNA and ONI on this subject resulted in a much abbreviated chapter 1, without any reference to this matter. In this revised form, the McConnell study was published in 1977, but the substance of his ideas on the SSBN withholding strategy did not appear in an unclassified form until much later with McConnell's essay in James L. George's volume, *Problems of Sea Power as We Approach the Twenty-First Century*.**

**McConnell had succeeded in introducing naval intelligence officers to the material they should be studying, but at the same time, the reception that his conclusions received had sowed the seeds of caution and disbelief for officials in dealing with the work of CNA. However, in the long run, McConnell's conclusions were born out by later evidence. The main problem at the heart of the issue was one of analysis. In retrospect, officers came to the conclusion that McConnell and others at CNA were doing their analysis and describing Soviet strategic plans on the basis of the literature of Soviet military science. This was academic and theoretical work designed to examine potential changes in future strategy and doctrine. It was not yet accepted or in use, but might possibly be an indication of a future direction or emphasis in those areas. While CNA was examining this theoretical literature, officers in naval intelligence were doing their analysis and description of Soviet strategy and fleet employment plans on the basis of observed Soviet**

fleet exercises. In contrast to the theoretical writings that CNA was examining, the exercises reflected past and current strategy, not future strategy. Reflecting on this dilemma for analysts of Soviet strategy, Captain W. H. J. Manthorpe, Jr., suggested that those who would try to predict whether the changes suggested by theory will actually occur are as likely to be wrong as right, since the transformation of military science into doctrine is as much a function of party and bureaucratic internal politics in the USSR as other factors. However, those who wait for the hard evidence from fleet exercises that strategy has actually changed are likely to be the last to recognize that the change has taken place. "The moral is," Manthorpe wrote, "if you want to be early you may be wrong, but if you want to be right you'll surely be late in recognizing changes to Soviet strategy."

In the late 1970s, the best tentative conclusion that could be reached was that McConnell's ideas could well be right, but that actual practice did not confirm that any such change had taken place. Neither side in the debate had solid evidence to confirm their views on the actual course that Soviet strategy would follow, but as a result of the debate, each side took increasingly hard stands in the face of an opposing interpretation.

The first good evidence that Soviet naval strategy had actually changed was the absence of a worldwide OKEAN exercise in 1980, similar to the ones that had occurred in 1970 and 1975; at the same time, several intelligence collection efforts paid off and sources were beginning to provide insight into Soviet naval force employment plans. At first, this data and the interpretation of it was incomplete and tentative, but during the latter half of 1980 and early 1981, a clear picture began to emerge through the compartmented information being used by ONI analysts. These analysts clearly appreciated the significance of the SSBN withholding strategy on the basis of the new evidence and saw its implications for American naval strategy.

Meanwhile, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral Sumner Shapiro, decided that something should be done to resolve a second issue: the dichotomy between the apparent increase in Soviet naval deployment to challenge the U.S. Navy in peacetime and the suggestion that, in wartime, the Soviet Navy would be employed to

defend Soviet SSBN bastions close to home waters. This raised the question as to whether the same Soviet forces could fulfill both roles without being placed in a disadvantageous position in the event of war, whether the Soviet Navy would expand its general purpose forces in order to carry out this dual role, or whether this dual role would limit Soviet peacetime deployment in order to be ready in the event of war. At the suggestion of Captain Thomas A. Brooks, **Rear Admiral Shapiro convened the first of three annual summer symposia to discuss this issue. The first symposium met at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. The participants included among others, ONI analysts, CNA analysts, academic experts and representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Defense Intelligence Agency. The discussions were held at the secret classification level, and the whole range of views about future Soviet navy employment were presented and discussed . . .**

The consensus of the conference was that the Soviets planned to retain their general purpose forces close to home waters in wartime in order to defend the homeland as well as to protect the SSBN force. Because of this, the peacetime employment of Soviet general purpose forces would probably not increase significantly in the future. These conclusions were ones that would not be widely applauded within the U.S. Navy. The conclusions implied that there would be a lessened Soviet peacetime presence that needed to be matched by Soviet forces and that in wartime, there would be a lessened threat to Western sea lines of communication, the protection of which was the principal mission for the navy envisaged by the Carter administration.

By the winter of 1980–1981, the available intelligence began to present a picture that confirmed these general conclusions. One could begin to see signs that the concept was in the early stages of introduction into the fleet as the strategy for the future. It showed clearly that the new pattern involved SSBN bastions in northern waters protected by the bulk of Soviet general purpose forces, and these concepts were being developed and tested in war games and in exercises. **The dissemination of this compartmented intelligence was made on a very restricted basis, piece by piece as it arrived. It was restricted to senior flag officers,** in particular, Rear Admiral Sumner Shapiro, the Director of Naval Intelligence; Admiral Thomas Hayward, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Advanced

Technology Panel (ATP), consisting of Admiral James Watkins, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations; Rear Admiral Kinnard McKee, the Director of the Office of Naval Warfare (OP-095); Rear Admiral Carlisle Trost, Director Navy Program Planning (OP-090); . . . the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Submarine Warfare (OP-02); and the Director of the Office of Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (OP-098). Also privy to this information was Captain William A. Cockell, Executive Assistant to Admiral Hayward. Cockell quickly recognized the implications of this intelligence for U.S. strategy and, with Captain Thomas A. Brooks, an intelligence specialist, drafted a memorandum for Admiral Hayward's signature directing the Office of Naval Intelligence to establish an organization for the continuing study of Soviet doctrine and strategy to complement the traditional ONI focus on equipment and capabilities. Captain Cockell was the catalyst within the organization that got the bureaucratic system moving to accommodate the new direction in intelligence analysis. His initiative was sustained by Rear Admiral Sumner Shapiro and his deputy Director of Naval Intelligence . . . through the creation of a new branch within the Office of Naval Intelligence, OP-009J, headed by Richard Haver with the assistance of Theodore Neely and Commander Michael Kramer. Paralleling this initiative, Rear Admiral Kinnard McKee saw that the new intelligence also had implications for the warfare capabilities of the U.S. Navy. In order to monitor these developments, McKee created within OP-95 a special group, first called Team C, and later Team Z, for this purpose.

During the winter of 1980–1981, ONI analysis of the new issues moved into high gear. Rear Admiral Shapiro clearly recognized that the analysis of Soviet intentions was an area that had been neglected and that the issue should be worked how the United States could learn to fight the Soviets most effectively. The focus of the new analytical effort was first directed by Captain Thomas A. Brooks, commanding officer of the newly established Naval Fleet Operational Intelligence Office at Fort Meade, and then shifted to the Pentagon under the direction of Richard Haver in OP-009J. By the spring of 1981, the initial ONI analysis had been completed, and by summer the first major presentations of the analysis and conclusions were made. As a result of this, Haver prepared a memorandum for Vice Admiral McKee to forward to the Chief of Naval Operations

recommending new considerations for countering Soviet strategy. Shortly thereafter, in August 1981, Captain Brooks briefed the new analysis of Soviet strategy and force employment concepts to the Chief of Naval Operations and the Fleet Commanders in Chief at their conference in Annapolis. This briefing marked a critical turning point in the development of the analysis. After listening to the briefing, Admiral Hayward found the concepts of Soviet strategy so completely different that he expressed disbelief that the Soviets could possibly operate their navy in such a manner. Several of the other four-star officers, including Admiral Bobby Inman, Deputy Director of the CIA, shared Hayward's view and questioned the validity of the analysis. The most knowledgeable officers present, Vice Admiral McKee and Admiral James Watkins, previously the Vice Chief, but then the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, did not speak up to defend the ONI analysis.

On the day after the Fleet CINCs' conference, Rear Admiral Shapiro called in Haver, Manthorpe, and Brooks to assess the setback to their work and to discuss what to do about it. From these conversations, it was decided that the best arrangement would be to use Captain William Studeman, an intelligence specialist who had just become the executive assistant to the new Vice Chief, Admiral William N. Small, and to keep him fully informed. Small, through this connection, quickly saw the implications of the new intelligence and revitalized the largely dormant mechanism of the Advanced Technology Panel as the means of reviewing intelligence and endorsing analysis of it, then bringing it to the direct attention of the CNO. With this, a major effort began within the navy staff to educate key officers in the new appreciation of Soviet strategy. This effort took several forms. As initially planned between the fall of 1981 and spring of 1982, the Advanced Technology Panel was fully briefed on the evidence for change in the Soviet concept of naval force employment. Then Admiral Small, as senior member, was able to report to Admiral Hayward that the ATP had endorsed the ONI analysis and began to move forward in examining the development of a U.S. "anti-SSBN strategy."

In other areas, the intelligence analysis began to be worked into broader staff documents. For example, in the Navy Net Assessment, which had been prepared in the summer and fall and approved in

December 1981, Captain Manthorpe had prepared a section which read:

The principal additional role gained by the Soviet Navy . . . has been the responsibility for protecting submarine strategic strike forces while war proceeds at less than nuclear level or while those forces are being withheld from a limited nuclear exchange as a second strike force.

**At the same time, ONI set out to get the intelligence community to produce a National Intelligence estimate which would endorse the ONI analysis of Soviet force employment concepts.** In November 1981, the Intelligence community completed an interagency Intelligence memorandum on “SOVIET INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES FOR INTERDICTING SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION IN A WAR WITH NATO.”

**This memorandum expressed the general agreement of Intelligence analysts that Soviet military planners regarded the wartime interdiction of NATO sea lines of communication as a secondary mission.** According to the memorandum, a few submarines would be employed in attacking commerce in the North Atlantic in the opening stage of a NATO–Warsaw Pact war, but the majority of naval forces would be deployed close to the USSR to defend its SSBN force and to protect the homeland from NATO’s nuclear armed naval strike force. **Following on from this, Captain James Eglin and Mr. Charles Summerall of ONI were given the task of making the navy contribution to the National Intelligence Estimate.** The estimate itself was drafted by Mr. Gene Sullivan of the Central Intelligence Agency and was ready for review in its first draft by March 1982. It was published in an SCI version in the fall of 1982, which was followed by a wider distribution at a lower classification. **Paralleling these efforts, Rich Haver from ONI began a series of briefings to influential people in the Navy Department. Haver became, as Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks recalled, “the Saint Paul of the movement, going forth among the Gentiles (read unrestricted line) and preaching the gospel. The conversion rate was astounding.”**

**By December 1981, The Advanced Technology Panel had fully developed an interpretation of Soviet intentions, which cast serious doubts on the conventional U.S. Strategy based on Soviet attack of Western sea lines of communication.** The new interpretation stressed

the importance of the United States being able to defeat the mission of the Soviet Navy. Originally characterized as “anti-SSBN operations,” **Admiral Small broadened this definition so that the issue could be seen in terms of vital Soviet interests at sea** as they used their general purpose navy to protect their SSBNs, and connecting this with the strategic situation in the key flank areas, the Norwegian Sea, and the eastern Mediterranean. **Over the next two years, between 1982–1984, the Vice Chief and the ATP focused their efforts on the creation of an “anti-SSBN” strategy both in terms of deterrence and war avoidance, and for war fighting.** This work was based on continuing intelligence analysis and was supported by a number of other efforts. Admiral Small devoted much of his own time to assessing the pros and cons of the “anti-SSBN strategy.” In connection with Small’s personal interest, Vice Admiral Carlisle Trost commissioned a study from the Center for Naval Analyses entitled “Assessing Soviet responses[to an anti-SSBN campaign].” The study was directed by Rear Admiral W. J. Holland, director of the Strategic and Theater Nuclear Warfare Division (OP-65), and his deputy, Captain Linton Brooks, assisted by Richard Haver and Captain Manthorpe. Using the basic work of this study, Small, Holland, and Brooks held weekly meetings to continue to develop the strategy.

**The final step in the process of selling the new analysis of Soviet strategy was a series of war games, the most important of which were those sponsored by the ATP to assess various aspects of the “anti-SSBN strategy.” Unlike some war games that are played, this was a “no holds barred, true all-source war game with the highest level of participation.”** In April 1982, this dealt with anti-SSBN concepts; in October 1982 with anti-SSBN and SSN deployment concepts; and in February 1983 with anti-SSBN war termination concepts. During these games, many useful insights were obtained for the use of submarines that were directly used in the strategy. Another aspect of the games touched on the utilization of aircraft carriers. In this, these games found that the most significant utilization of the aircraft carrier was as a “tactical nuclear reserve” to tie down significant numbers of Soviet air assets while remaining beyond their effective reach just below the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap, until that point in a war when it became necessary to negotiate with the Soviet Union whether the war could be terminated or would escalate to a nuclear war. In this sense, the carriers became a nuclear

bargaining chip. In the formulation of the strategy, however, the role of the carriers was overlooked, while most of the effort was concentrated on the submarine campaign. **Through this kind of tabletop war gaming with the participation of senior flag officers in positions of responsibility, the concepts behind the strategy and the relationship of intelligence analysis to strategy were clearly brought out and developed and integrated into other aspects of naval planning.**

Following the April 1982 war game, Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman became aware of this work while the debate was in progress over the desirability of a strategy against SSBNs. The idea was compatible with the forward strategy air strikes, the criticality of Japan, the employment of the Tomahawk missiles, Marine Corps thinking, and other considerations, but **the skepticism of some made it clear that an anti-SSBN campaign could only be one of the options available for the navy, not its principal focus.**

**As the process of strategy development continued, the security sensitivity of the associated intelligence information created some difficulty in handling, but Admiral James Watkins, the Chief of Naval Operations from June 1982 to June 1986, ordered that each major fleet staff set aside a cell cleared to know what was going on and to reflect as much as possible on this new thinking. It took time to do this, and for a period, certain commanders and certain staffs had the information while others did not. Not surprisingly, there were some imbalances. . . . [The] Deputy CNO for Submarine Warfare (OP-02) and a member of the ATP, moved quickly to set up the first cell on the staff of the Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic. This, however, was in advance of the cell established on the staff of the Commander I Chief, Atlantic.**

In July 1982, Captain Thomas A. Brooks was assigned to the staff of Admiral Harry Train, Commander in Chief, Atlantic. **The new cell was activated within several months, but not fully manned until well into the first year of Admiral Wesley McDonald's tenure as CINCLANT. With the assistance of this cell, McDonald began to utilize the new intelligence data in flag level conferences and through special briefings. Similar cells were established in other fleet areas, at later dates. In the Atlantic Fleet, the initiation of an intelligence cell on the staff of Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic, marked the**

beginning of reevaluation and rewriting of the existing war plans. Not surprisingly, this began with the submarine force, but shortly became widespread throughout the fleet. It quickly worked into the thinking of the navy in general through the various threads of changing personnel assignments among the key individuals involved, the discussions among the Fleet commanders in their annual strategy conferences, war games, and the discussions involved in the work of the CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG) based at the Naval War College. In these ways, the new insights and analyses about Soviet naval force employment were spread throughout the navy and became a key element in strategic analysis.

# Christopher Ford and David Rosenberg on 'High OPINTEL' in the Era of the 'Maritime Strategy'

This chapter reprints significant extracts from Chapter 5 of Christopher Ford and David Rosenberg, *The Admiral's Advantage: U.S. Navy Operational Intelligence in World War II and the Cold War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 77-108 (minus endnotes).<sup>5</sup>

## A Revolution in understanding the Soviet adversary

If it is the role of the intelligence professionals to “know thine enemy,” it is also an unfortunate human weakness to assume—as depicted in Walt Kelly’s parody of Commo. Oliver Hazard Perry’s 1813 dispatch from the brig USS *Niagara*—that upon meeting the enemy, he will invariably turn out to be just like us. Different social and military cultures, histories, and experiences, however, can produce commanders who can think and act in very different ways. Mirror-imaging the adversary—that is, assuming that his reactions in a given set of circumstances will be the same ones that one would have oneself—is thus a common analytical trap of which the prudent the prudent intelligence professional must continually be aware.

Similarly, it is also true that “any serious thinking about strategy must necessarily deal with the effect that one’s forces will have on an opponent,” a doubly complex task that involves not simply choosing an optimal course of action for one’s own forces but choosing a course that takes into consideration how each particular enemy is likely to react. Therefore, a complete interrelationship between the

---

<sup>5</sup> The author thanks the Naval Institute Press for permission to quote significant extracts from this work.

intelligence and command functions exists in the strategic arena as well as that of day-to-day operations.

These dynamics were no less perplexing during the Cold War than during any other period. After all, “the military strategies of the Soviet Union, the United States, and their various allies had very different historical roots, and the institutions they maintained to educate their officers, train their soldiers, plan their wars, and procure and build their weapons and materiel differed in significant ways from one another.” Just as these different military cultures and operational concepts could produce weapons systems that performed differently and had different functions, so also could they produce warfighters who thought and reacted differently. Taking such differences into account at the operational and strategic levels was a challenge for both intelligence professionals and commanders.

The many triumphs of U.S. technical intelligence during the Cold War produced some remarkably good intelligence about the capabilities and status of the Soviet armed forces. Without “regular access to high-level message-like sources and a sustained effort to interpret them,” however, the U.S. intelligence apparatus had great difficulty taking the intelligence art to its highest level: discovering how the enemy thinks and anticipating his plans and reactions. Thus, U.S. naval analysts and strategic planners too often assumed that Soviet admirals would act and react just as American ones would—that is, they would endeavor to bring about fleet-to-fleet actions on the high seas aimed at contesting control of crucial strategic sea lines of communication. As one naval historian described it, for year,

the predominant view in America was one which saw the Soviets building a naval force with many capabilities similar to that which the United States had developed. Most importantly, the existence of a blue-water Soviet Navy seemed to emphasize, in American minds, the capability for peacetime power projection and the capability for wartime attack on U.S. and Western naval forces and sea lines of communication, as well as a capacity for strategic nuclear strikes from the sea....In short, Americans tended to view the new Soviet naval capabilities in terms of mirror-imaging and refighting World War II.

As a result of such assumptions, for most of the Cold War, U.S. strategists imagined that the naval part of World War III would be a high-technology, nuclear-armed reenactment of the 1939-45 conflict.

## **A new view emerges**

Despite such traditional mirror-imaging, however, some specialists in Soviet affairs—basing their analysis heavily upon “Soviet naval writings, naval exercises, and construction trends” —gradually “began to develop an interpretation that tried to move away from an American, ethnocentric view of the Soviets.” In particular, Robert W. Herrick’s 1968 study of Soviet naval strategy argued for an essentially defensive conception of Soviet naval doctrine. Analysts such as James McConnell and others at the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) also did influential work on this subject in the 1970s.

CNA concluded, for example, that the Soviets planned to withhold their SLBM force during the conventional stages of a war with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and during initial nuclear strikes “in order to provide either a second strike capability or to retain a bargaining chip during [war-terminated] negotiations.” To this end, CNA believed that Moscow would operate its SSBNs within special “bastions” protected by naval forces dedicated to sea control missions as a means of strategic defense, thus giving the Soviet navy an important war-termination mission. This analysis led CNA analysts to suggest the need for the U.S. Navy to attack or threaten Soviet strategy by developing antisubmarine warfare capabilities in Soviet home waters that could threaten these bastions and thereby enhance the deterrent effect of U.S. naval power. This strategy, they felt, would make it more difficult for the Soviets to rely upon the underwater strategic missile reserve they believe crucial to a warfighting strategy. Thus, stated, this analysis encapsulates much of the thinking of the Maritime Strategy of the early 1980s.

Though some of these studies clearly proved remarkably prescient, their authors were for some time prophets without honor in their own country. In the end, it took a series of dramatic intelligence breakthroughs in the late 1970s to tip the intellectual center of gravity within the U.S. Navy against the traditional view. It was not until November 1981, in fact, that an interagency intelligence memorandum on “Soviet Intentions and Capabilities for Interdicting

Sea Lines of Communication in a War with NATO” embodied the final agreement of the U.S. intelligence community that CNA had been right all along: the Soviets regarded SLOC attack as a secondary mission. ONI prepared a similar assessment as the Navy’s input to a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in 1982.

The intelligence breakthroughs that helped propel the Navy down this path owed much to improvements in U.S. analytic abilities, providing “a vital synergism that brought about a more holistic view of Soviet military advances.” Crucially, however, these analytical breakthroughs were confirmed by dramatic “deep penetrations” of the Soviet adversary, penetrations about which it is still impossible—officially, at least—to describe at anything but the most highly classified level. These successes allowed detailed studies of such things as Soviet “command and control arrangements,” plans for the use of standby reserves, and the conduct of (and after-action analysis of) naval exercises

The new intelligence sources were “predominantly SIGINT,” but also included “some very significant HUMINT penetration of senior echelons of the Soviet leadership.” These insights also revealed much about how Soviet planners viewed U.S. war planning. Perhaps not surprisingly, “how they viewed U.S. strategy in time of war...was about as wrong as our view of the Soviet strategy, prior to that time, had been.” As such sources developed, “new classifications of ‘sensitive compartmented information [SCI] were created” for the control of this sensitive information. Handling this new information was difficult and access was initially restricted to only a handful of high officials. In 1982, in procedures that mirrored the handling of ULTRA information during World War II, small cells of indoctrinated officers were set up on each major fleet staff. With this slowly broadening access, information about the new insights into Soviet operational plans gradually spread throughout the Navy leadership.

As a result, writing meaningfully about lessons from the role of intelligence in the Cold War is exceedingly difficult. The Cold War decades are “arguably the most interesting and certainly the most expensive” in the history of U.S. Naval Intelligence, but they remain heavily “shrouded in classification and...may be at the most risk for [historical] preservation.” Nevertheless, while discussion of the specifics of these breakthroughs must await future declassification, it

has recently become possible to discuss the basic fact that some such “deep penetrations” occurred. It is thus possible to learn lessons about the institutions and organizational cultures that produced them and how they were able to take advantage of the insights they provided.

Regardless of their specifics, it is clear that the results of these intelligence breakthroughs were dramatic. In the late 1970s and early 1980s,

several sensitive sources became available which provided us, for the first time, with highly accurate insights gleaned from the highest levels of the Soviet regime. The information derived from these sources confirmed analyses of unclassified Soviet doctrinal writings that had been going on within ONI, at the Center for Naval Analyses, and at DNI-sponsored symposia for several years....

While it lasted, the insights gained from these [deep penetration] sources allowed the U.S. Navy, led by naval intelligence, to totally reassess how the Soviets would fight a war, where their strengths and vulnerabilities were, and how their perception and prejudices caused them to view us. This enabled naval intelligence to stimulate and participate not only in a complete rewrite of U.S. naval strategy and the war plans which governed how the U.S. would fight a war with the Soviet Union, but also to plan and conduct meaningful perception management.

In the words of one participant, "We began to understand Soviet perceptions, expectations, and intentions in a possibly unique way."

The combined insights of these highly sensitive “deep penetrations” and of unclassified scholarly analyses of Soviet naval doctrine helped lead the U.S. Navy completely to revise its strategic concept of operations vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, producing the so-called Maritime Strategy. Such insights helped vindicate and amplify upon the open-source insights of CNA and authors such as Herrick, and helped make possible the “slow development of an interpretation that tried to move away from an ethnocentric view of the Soviet in soviet terms on the basis of the Soviet Union’s values and the view, aims, and objectives of its leaders.”

As Adm. David Jeremiah recalls of the period,

Through a variety of sources, we learned enough about how the Russians perceived their force capability to be, so that we could be much more aggressive in the use of maritime forces....We made assumptions in beginning without that information, that “you are a naval officer,[so] you are going to operate just like I operate.” ...[We assumed that] “everybody looks like me.” [But] everybody *doesn't* look like me. They don't think like [me]. Different culture...When we understood that the Russians didn't operate the way we did, then we could take advantage of that.

## Evaluating the new intelligence and its implications

As with much really valuable intelligence, the remarkable new intelligence sources that began providing information in the late 1970s about how Soviet admirals actually planned to fight the Third World War did not yield their bounty to casual intelligence analysis. Indeed, it was some time before the U.S. Navy was able to evaluate it properly and began to understand its profound implications. One of the Navy's first steps in evaluating this information was to establish special teams to study it with the requisite depth and intensity.

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Adm. Sumner (“Shap”) Shapiro, chose civilian analyst Richard Haver to lead the analytical work being done by OP-009 within the Office of Naval Intelligence, reporting directly to Shapiro himself. Dr. Alfred Andreassen—the chief civilian scientist at the Directorate of Naval Warfare (OP-05)—was subsequently also brought into this endeavor as the head of “Team Charlie.” That group was populated mostly by line officers whose job it was to assess the implications of the new ideas being developed by Haver's OP-009J. In 1978, under CNO Adm. Thomas Hayward, the Navy also established a Strategic Studies Group (SSG) at the Naval War College, which reported directly to the CNO and worked heavily upon many of these issues of Soviet naval doctrine. Finally, the Strategic Concepts Branch (OP-603), staffed by “line officers who were part of the navy's political-military planning brain trust,” played an important role in developing new strategic approaches in conjunction with allied NATO naval commanders.

The “board of directors” for this overall assessment and evaluation effort was something called the Advanced Technology Panel (ATP), an institution established by the Chief of Naval Operations in 1975 and consisting of several senior flag officers under Vice CNO Adm.

William Small and his successors. The ATP's official mission—stated in understandably vague terms given the sensitive nature of the project—was to advise the CNO on “issues identified through insights provided by highly sensitive intelligence, future warfighting capabilities available through advanced technology, and innovative strategic thinking.

Over time, as OP-009J's analysis matured, the ATP shifted focus from evaluating Soviet capabilities in light of the new intelligence to devising approaches for acting on this information. Given across-the-board access to even the most sensitive new intelligence, the ATP was able to provide an unmatched, truly “all”-source analytical perspective that helped it understand Soviet perceptions, expectations and intentions in new ways. Issues related to “the Soviet defensive employment issue” represented only “a very small part of the ATP agenda,” but the panel was nonetheless to play an important role in the process that gave rise to the U.S. Navy's new operational approach in the early 1980s.

## **Selling the new ideas and changing the Navy**

This focused effort to evaluate and assess the implications of Soviet naval planning helped revolutionize American naval doctrine by giving U.S. commanders a far better understanding of their likely adversary and enabling them to devise strategies and approaches based not upon mirror-imaging but upon genuine insight. Ultimately, the late 1970s and early 1980s represent one of the very few instances in history where the acquisition of intelligence helped lead a nation to completely revise its concept of military operations. In other words of two participants, this period thus stands as an example of “how good intelligence, well-analyzed and well-applied by teams of Intelligence Officers and Line Officers working together, enabled the U.S. Navy to devise a strategy and a set of war plans which would have helped ensure victory, should we have had to fight a war with the USSR.

That new intelligence information could be acquired is itself a remarkable tale that owes much to the planning, foresight, and willingness to take risks shown by the Navy's senior leadership during the 1960s and early 1970s, without which these vital “deep penetrations” of the Soviet Union could not have occurred. That the

acquisition of such information could lead to wholesale doctrinal revisions, however, is in some ways an even more remarkable story. The institutional history of this Navy “sea change” must be told elsewhere, but in some respects the Navy was simply lucky: the service’s leaders were fortunate that these intelligence windfalls could be whispered into ears that were willing to listen.

Not everyone was equally willing to listen, of course. Though one might have expected the Navy’s submarine community to grasp Soviet pro-SSBN “nuclear correlation of forces” concepts more quickly than admirals with surface warfare or aviation backgrounds, Admiral Small remembers that U.S. submariners were “not in favor of anti-SSBN concepts.” The submarine community’s resistance to new strategic thinking about submarine operations, however, apparently did not long survive the retirement of Adm. Hyman Rickover, the founding father of the U.S. nuclear Navy in 1982. According to Small, it was the Navy Secretariat itself that became the focus of much resistance to the Maritime Strategy, apparently because “the new view of Soviet operations did not support the 600 ship Navy requirement” as strongly as Secretary John Lehman would have preferred.

## **Operator/intelligencer trust and credibility**

The Navy was ultimately willing to listen for several reasons. To begin with, Navy intelligence professionals were themselves fortunate in that they were able to draw upon a considerable reservoir of operator trust and credibility. This illustrates the continued importance of the operator/intelligencer relationship: if senior Navy leaders had not learned to trust intelligence advice and respect those who offered it, the new insights into Soviet war planning would have been worthless. As one former DNI recalled, the Navy’s leadership “at the three- and four-star level are people who grew up side by side with intelligence. They understood its importance. It was operationally relevant to them when they were in operational billets.” As a result, they learned to trust intelligence as a basis for operational planning thereafter. This was a crucial element in convincing operators to accept ONI’s “new thinking” in the late 1970s and early 1980s: “the key was . . . the credibility of the ONI leadership that was presenting this case to the unrestricted line Navy.

By bringing operators and intelligence professionals together to help assess Maritime Strategy-era “new thinking,” Team Charlie further improved the already close relationship between the two communities. So successful did this model prove, in fact, that the Navy subsequently institutionalized it through the creation of analytic groups that brought together both intelligence professionals and operators into analytical groups to analyze an adversary’s doctrine and tactics. Team Charlie thus provided the model for present-day ONI organizations such as SWORD (Submarine Warfare Operations Research Division, which does submarine analysis), SPEAR (Strike Projection Evaluation and Anti-air Research, which assesses air and strike operations), and SABER (Surface Analysis Branch for Evaluation and Reporting, which analyses surface warfare).

## **Validation through war gaming**

Another crucial factor in the acceptance of the new ideas was their validation in practice—or at least “virtual” practice—through extensive war gaming. These efforts brought operators and intelligence professionals together to test their theories in something approximating “real life,” and proved invaluable in developing ways for the U.S. Navy to counter the operational plans that it now understood the Soviets to have. From the beginning, the Navy leadership chose war gaming as “one of its key analytical tools,” and, with the ATP’s sponsorship, a series of war games were conducted from 1982 onward, supported by “all-source” intelligence information at the “code word” (SCI) level, to validate key concepts of the Navy’s new theoretical approach.

## **Perception management: Provocation or deterrence?**

The importance of such deterrent dynamics may suggest why the ATP’s initial Soviet strategy study group in 1982 and the subsequent larger working group of junior admirals and senior captains formed in 1984 to support the ATP in deterring Soviet strategic options for war focused so much of its attention upon “perception management.” This included likely Soviet reactions to American anti-SSBN operations and the effects of command, control, and communications countermeasures (C<sup>3</sup>CM)—that is, the disruption of Soviet battle-management capabilities. The aim of much of the Maritime Strategy, as one ATP Soviet strategy working group member

put it, was to “continuously reinforce in the Soviet mind the perception that it could not win a war with the United States, both *before* a war, to enhance deterrence, and at all phases of the war should it occur.... The key point is that the desired prospect must be as *perceived and measured in Soviet terms*. The ATP hoped that if faced with aggressive moves that threatened their control of the Norwegian Sea and other northern areas, “the Soviets would seek war termination prior to increasingly intensive assaults by Marines and CVBGs [carrier battle groups] on the Soviet flanks and without risking nuclear war.”

# “Literary intelligence”: Approach and methodology

## CNA’s approach

CNA analysts of Soviet open-source military writings in the 1970s and 1980s took a particular approach toward what they termed “literary intelligence”, well captured in the following passage from CNA’s 1981 annual report:

On several occasions in the 1970s, developments in Soviet weaponry caught the West by surprise. Part of the reason is the almost total reliance on technical intelligence and the relative neglect of literary intelligence drawn from Soviet writings. This neglect arises largely from the lack of agreed-upon method of interpreting Soviet writings and a lack of faith in literary intelligence on the part of decision-makers, who have no basis for choosing between competing interpretations and are unaware of the value of the conclusions that can be drawn if Soviet writings are carefully analyzed.

CNA’s analysts of Soviet military affairs have found that the open Soviet literature is not only *a* source for determining intentions, but in some cases the best and even the *only* source. In any event, Soviet writings seem to be the earliest source; Soviet doctrinal statements usually precede the appearance of capabilities that are afforded by new weapons. . . .

. . . To demonstrate the value of literary intelligence, delineate their methods of analysis, and encourage the formation of a common analytical approach, CNA’s analysts have been conducting formal studies and holding seminars with interested analysts and consumers of intelligence. The studies and seminars have dealt with a number of problems in analyzing the Soviet press: the question of the authoritativeness and reliability of Soviet statements; the Soviets’ use of historical and current foreign surrogates for their own views; definitional problems; the Soviets’ practice of expressing their views by standard formulas and of indicating shifts in view by slightly changing the wording of

formulas; their use of elliptical logic and expression, and non-sequential and implicit logic; and finally a common denominator of most of these problems – their implicative technique, where they imply and the reader must infer.<sup>6</sup>

## CNA's methodology

The above narratives discuss in general terms the approach taken toward open sources by CNA's analysts. More specifically, CNA's methodology in interpreting Soviet open sources was:

- **Fundamentally based on a deep and highly nuanced understanding of the Soviet adversary's military language.**
- **Reliant in part on the Soviet's practice of "mirror-imaging": attributing their own strategic and operational calculus to their adversaries in the West.**
- **Trusting that the sources examined represented real Soviet thinking, not "disinformation" aimed at Western analysts.**

As Dr. James McConnell, CNA's principal Soviet open-source analyst, characterized his technique:

Because of its obliqueness, [Soviet open literature] is not easy to read and interpret. To be successful, the analyst has to constantly bear in mind certain Soviet communications techniques: the tendency to imply rather than state; the use of elliptical logic and expression; the avoidance of sustained arguments; the failure to highlight noteworthy items or new points of departure; and the presentation of information by particular authors and in particular media that, a priori, one might not expect to be frank. Above all, the analyst should be aware of the standard Soviet practice of attributing views, capabilities, and intentions to the West that are mirror images of Soviet counterparts. Their expressions of concern about a Western threat, whether real or fabricated, should

---

<sup>6</sup> *Annual Report 1981* (Center for Naval Analyses, 12 December 1981), pp. 32-33.

normally be interpreted as tit-for-tat justification of a roughly symmetrical Soviet capability.<sup>7</sup>

A knowledgeable observer of the application of this technique described an example of it as follows:

McConnell believes that Gorshkov was speaking authoritatively. He bases this conclusion on a detailed analysis of the linguistic conventions the Soviets apparently use to distinguish military science from military doctrine. In the Soviet view military science is not official, but features the "clash of opinions." Military doctrine, however, "has the force of state law" and expresses "united views" (*edinstvo vzglyadov*). Science examines the past, present, and future; doctrine considers only the "present and immediate future." The substantive focus of military science proper is military-technical (e.g., the laws of armed combat) while the focus of military doctrine is military-political, covering both peace and war. Finally, McConnell also points to a third branch of Soviet military thought: "concrete expressions of doctrine." This is a branch of military science that elaborates and justifies the general principles of doctrine. As part of military science, "concrete expressions of doctrine" can discuss the past and future, and because they are based upon doctrine, they are authoritative, concerned with military-political questions, and they express a "unity of views."

McConnell concludes that the Gorshkov series was authoritative because it contains a series of discrete phrases that he views as consistent with the Soviet definitions of a "concrete expression of doctrine." Gorshkov's editors claim that "in their opinion...the publication of these articles will foster the development of a unity of views..." and Gorshkov repeated a similar phrase in his own introduction to the first installment. Second, Gorshkov denies giving exclusive focus to the Navy, and explicitly refers to the need to rely on all of the Soviet armed forces. This is seen as consistent with doctrine as well, because the Soviet military lexicon does not recognize separate service doctrines, only a single

---

<sup>7</sup> James M. McConnell, *A Possible Change in Soviet Views on the Prospects for anti-Submarine Warfare* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, Professional Paper 431, January 1985), pp. 1-2.

military doctrine for the entire state. Moreover, there is a separate "naval science."<sup>8</sup>

## Sources

CNA Soviet subject matter experts routinely read several Soviet open-source professional journals, monographs, and newspapers, winnowing them down over time to sources that they trusted would yield the insights they were seeking. They relied heavily on the Soviet Navy's principal theoretical journal, *Morskoy sbornik* (Naval Digest) and similar writings.<sup>9</sup>

In the appendix is an example of the types of sources used, taken from a representative piece of CNA Soviet open-source analysis of the 1980s.

## The disinformation issue

CNA analysts believed firmly that the open sources they were analyzing were true reflections of the Soviet calculus, and not simply "disinformation" aimed at deceiving Western readers. As James McConnell noted:

No segment of this literature is specifically aimed at foreign readers; the principal target is domestic. It is a peculiar form of inflated Western self-esteem that turns a literature read for profit in the Soviet Union into a performance for its own benefit. Moscow is, of course, aware of alien eavesdropping; hence much of the rigid propaganda conventions, the misleading statements, the guarded language that borders on the opaque. The substance of the message is not affected, however; the Kremlin cannot afford to deceive its own cadres. If disinformation be defined as a communication that the Soviet elite, skilled in reading the

---

<sup>8</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *Analysts in War and Peace: McGwire, McConnell, and Admiral Gorshkov* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, Professional Paper 458, September 1987), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report: 1985 (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1985), 29-30.

literature of its specialty, would declare to be untruth, then there is very little disinformation in the Soviet press.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> James M. McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development," *World Politics* XXXVII (April 1985): 319.

This page intentionally left blank

## Lessons drawn from the narratives

What follows are a series of conclusions, observations, and recommendations derived from the case study of the U.S. Maritime Strategy of the 1980s and applicable to present and future U.S. commanders and their staffs and subordinate commanders seeking to understand and exploit the strategic and operational calculus of a 21<sup>st</sup> century adversary, e.g.: Iran.

It is important to recall that **each of these lessons derives from the actual experience of the Maritime Strategy case study**, as related in the preceding narratives. They are not the product of theorizing, conceptualizing, brainstorming, or BOGSAT. While readers may well be familiar with many of them, the point to take away from this analysis is that **each of them actually worked once, to the benefit of U.S. political leaders and commanders and to the detriment of an important adversary**. Even if they only validate current command thinking, it is a significant empirical validation.

### On understanding the adversary

- In planning military operations at the strategic and operational levels, commanders must assess the probability of how an adversary might act or react – his perceptions, expectations, and intentions.
- Commanders must ensure that their view of an adversary's strategic and operational calculus includes an understanding of how that adversary views *their own* (U.S.) strategic and operational calculus.
- Planners must guard against mirror-imaging the adversary, or assuming that he will refight an earlier war, just because a potential future war will take place in the same geography and/or involve the same (or similar) actors as the previous one.
- On the other hand, planners should try to identify and use an adversary's own "mirror imaging" practices, analyzing adversary

statements about the calculus of the United States and its allies in terms of what they may indicate about the adversary's own calculus.

- An adversary's perceived military and naval requirements for deterrence, peacetime combat readiness, and actual combat may differ considerably from those of the United States.
- Adversary inter-service and intra-service branch relationships may differ considerably from U.S. relationships, and manifest themselves in major differences in an adversary's operational calculus. Forces that are well integrated in U.S. practice may not be in adversary practice, while forces that operate autonomously in U.S. practice may require support from others in adversary practice.
- A deep knowledge of the historical military experience of the adversary – not just the most recent war – is necessary.
- Endless repetition of statements based on mirror-imaging or refighting the last war in the Congress, in the press, among the national security cognoscenti, and by executive branch officials does not necessarily make them correct.

## On using sources

- Commanders and their staffs should ensure that they have access to a broad spectrum of thinking about an adversary's strategic and operational calculus, not limited to the intelligence community and not limited to classified sources.
- Unclassified adversary sources can have great value in interpreting an adversary's strategic and operational calculus.
- Sources outside the intelligence community – performing a “team B” function – can serve useful purposes in divining an adversary's intentions, given the nature of their education, experience, techniques, preferred sources, and positions outside formal U.S. government chains of authority.<sup>11</sup> Their conclusions may differ considerably from those of the

---

<sup>11</sup> Examples include FFRDCs such as RAND, IDA, and CNA.

intelligence community. This should not cause them to be dismissed out of hand by commanders.

- U.S. commanders, intelligence officers, and operators should acquaint themselves with sources used by outside analysts and their rationales for using those sources, as well as with the products of those analysts themselves.
- Corroboration of open-source and compartmented SIGINT and HUMINT information can be a powerful indicator of an adversary's strategic and operational calculus.
- A deep understanding of the nuances of the linguistic conventions of an adversary's military language is vital to the effective exploitation of an adversary's open sources. This concept was the basis for the bulk of CNA's insights

## On integration

- Commanders must guard against the “stove-piping” of intelligence and operations functions, both by their own staffs and in any outside advice they might seek. Understanding and acting upon an adversary's strategic and operational calculus can only occur if the two functions are well integrated. One of the strengths of outside analysts can be that their efforts are usually not constrained by compartmentalization into “intelligence” and “operations” analyses.
- Extensive intelligence officer involvement in operations at the tactical and operational levels yields dividends in trust and credibility among operators that in turn enables intelligence officers to be influential at the operational and strategic levels as regards adversary's operational and strategic calculus. Habits of intelligence officer–operator cooperation nurtured in the field and at sea can bear fruit later on.
- Fora (e.g., symposia) should be created wherein intelligence analysts and outside analysts can discuss and debate, in the presence of commanders and/or their operational staffs. Very real security considerations must be dealt with appropriately, but such dialogues can be invaluable to commanders and staffs seeking to understand and counter an adversary's strategic and operational calculus.

- To ensure integration and synergies among the appropriate communities, decision-makers should consider the creation of new special offices or cells aimed at:
  - Synthesizing data and analyses from a variety of sources, at a variety of classification levels
  - Integrating the viewpoints of knowledgeable intelligence and warfighting operations personnel
  - Disseminating resultant conclusions throughout the intelligence community and operating forces at appropriate reduced levels of classification
  - Harnessing the energies of key leaders who “get it”—thought-leaders and staff officers (military and civilian), intelligence officers, and operators — to brief and persuade others.
- These cells should not only be established on the commander’s staff but also be replicated at lower echelons throughout the command – and at the war colleges – to facilitate the integration and dissemination effort.
- Service vice chiefs (and by extension COCOM deputy commanders) are particularly well placed to initiate and maintain such integrative efforts on their staffs, and especially to create and sustain synergies among new special cells and existing staff intelligence, operations, logistics, and plans offices.

## On analysis and war gaming

- Observing and analyzing an adversary’s *exercises and training* can yield much information and insight regarding an adversary’s recent operational calculus. But exercises are often based on current and recent doctrine, not experimentation with new concepts and ideas. Too strong a focus on potential adversary exercises may yield little in helping divine the direction in which the adversary’s strategic or operational calculus is heading — i.e., what he might do next. Analyses of exercises should be conducted alongside analyses of *strategies, concepts, doctrines, visions*, etc., that can be gleaned from a variety of adversary sources, including open sources. Operators and

intelligence officers should guard against dismissing such sources as “theoretical” (and presumably not useful) as opposed to “operational” (and therefore presumably useful).

- Adversary exercise or deployment patterns may indicate the operational calculus of the adversary’s *military*, including their recent or current operational calculus; however, they may not indicate the strategic or operational calculus of an adversary’s *political or bureaucratic leadership*, when faced with the need to make real-world decisions on the employment of adversary armed forces in combat.
- War games can be particularly useful venues to assess various counters to an adversary’s strategic and operational calculus, and gain insights into that calculus. They are most effective when they include participation from the highest levels of command, as well as high-level operators and intelligence officers.

## On impediments

- Should issues concerning adversary’s operational and strategic calculus reach the Pentagon, they may be viewed in terms of existing U.S. program and budget requirements and competitions. Combatant commanders, planners, operators, and intelligence officers must expect this, and prepare for it.

## On change

- Decision-makers can and will change their views of an adversary’s strategic and operational calculus when presented with compelling evidence, but this can take a long time.
- Dramatic intelligence breakthroughs and windfalls can and do occur. When they do, intelligence officers should ensure that commanders are fully briefed, and commanders must be prepared to change ingrained ways of thinking and set up mechanisms to instill those changes in their operators as well.
- The introduction of new adversary weapon systems, or new U.S. weapon systems, may alter an adversary’s operational calculus – or not. It is important to ascertain carefully whether the calculus is changing.

## On exploitation

- *Understanding* an adversary's strategic and operational calculus should lead inexorably to *exploiting* that understanding, and – through *perception management operations* – seeking to influence that calculus in ways detrimental to the adversary and favorable to the United States, across all phases of war.

## An example: 21<sup>st</sup>-century Iran

### Differences between the two cases

- Unlike the Soviet Union during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 21<sup>st</sup> century Iran is not a global peer competitor of the United States.
- The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) have major capability constraints that limit their options.
- The Iranian military and its naval forces are not as wedded to written doctrine as Soviet military forces were.
- Iran's naval forces today and for the foreseeable future are principally regional, green-water, coastal forces, focused on the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.
- The IRIN and IRGCN focus almost entirely on anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) operations.
- Iran and its naval forces today do not possess a strategic nuclear capability.
- There is little focus by Iranian naval forces on support for ground forces.
- Iranian out-of-area naval operations, while increasing, are not significant.

### Similarities between the two cases

- The United States knows more about the Iranians past and current capabilities and what they have been trained to do, than about what they would think and what they would actually do in a future crisis or war.

- Iranian open sources and “grey literature” are under-exploited.
- U.S. analysts, operators and decision-makers are overly dependent on technical intelligence (TECHINT).
- Many U.S. analysts, operators, and decision-makers tend to engage in “mirror-imaging.” They often lack an understanding of how and why Iranians actually think, strategically and operationally.
- The U.S. government has not sufficiently and effectively cultivated and exploited the expertise of the U.S. civilian academic communities that study Iran.
- War gaming and symposia and other specialized academia-intelligence community fora are under-utilized as sources for gaining insights on Iranian military strategic and operational calculus.

This page intentionally left blank

## Appendix: An example of the range of Soviet open source citations by CNA analysts

Reprinted below are the endnotes to a representative piece of CNA Soviet open-source analysis.<sup>12</sup> They are provided to illustrate the range and types of sources that CNA analysts used.

1. I. A. Bykhovskiy, *Atomnye podvodnye lodki* (Leningrad, 1957), p. 66.

2. S. Ruban and N. Antonov, "Above the Ocean Depths," *Krasnaya zvezda* 5 June 1963; P. A. Astashenkov, *Sovetskie raketnye voyska* (Moscow, 1964), p. 180; S. G. Gorshkov, "Problems of the Navy," in A. A. Grechko (ed., *Yadernyy vek i voyna* (Moscow, 1964), p. 66; Editorial, "On Guard Over the Fatherland's Sea Perimeters," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 12, 1964, p. 54; V. P. Pavlov, "Problems of Employing Nuclear-Powered Missile Submarines," *Morskoy sbornik*, No. 7, 1964, p. 81; P. P. Nevzorov, "The Use of Aviation in Anti-Submarine Warfare," *Ibid.*, No. 9, 1964, pp. 27, 33; V. D. Sokolovskiy and M. I. Cherednichenko, "The Military Art at a New Stage," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 28 August 1964; V. Zemskov, "Policy is Still an Arms Race," *Ibid.*, 17 February 1965, p. 4.

3. N. I. Belavin and V. M. Kuplyanskiy, *Glavnoe oruzhie flota* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 239, 244-247. Also see: V. Grishanov, "Guardian of Our Sea Perimeters," *Zvestiya*, 28 July 1963; and Ruban and Antonov, op. cit.

4. J. M. McConnell, "The Gorshkov Articles, the New Gorshkov Book, and Their Relation to Policy," in Michael McGwire and John McDonnell (eds.), *Soviet Naval Influence* (New York: Praeger, 1977), pp. 570-571, 585-586; J. M. McConnell, "Strategy and Missions of the Soviet Navy in the Year 2000," in James L. George (ed.), *Problems of Sea Power as We Approach the Twenty-First Century* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), pp. 47-48.

---

<sup>12</sup> James M. McConnell, *A Possible Change in Soviet Views on the Prospects for Anti-Submarine Warfare* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) Professional Paper, 431, January 1985), 12-16.

5. J. M. McConnell, *The Interacting Evolution of Soviet and American Military Doctrines* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), Professional Paper 412, September 1980), p. 60.
6. J. M. McConnell, "Military-Political Tasks of the Soviet Navy in War and Peace," in John Hardt and Herman Franssen (eds.), *Soviet Oceans Development* (Washington: GPO, 1976), pp. 193-209; McConnell, *The Interacting Evolution of Soviet and American Military Doctrines*, pp. 50-60.
7. McConnell, in MccGwire and McDonnell, op. cit., pp. 592-596.
8. N. Shatrov, "Trends in the Development and Use of Navies," *Voennaya mysl'*, No. 1, 1972, p. 45.
9. G. Sturua, "Naval Forces in U.S. Expansionist Policy," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 10, 1979, p. 121. I am indebted to Jeff Fenton for bringing this passage to my attention.
10. J. M. McConnell, *The Soviet Shift in Emphasis from Nuclear to Conventional* (Alexandria: CNA, CRC 490, June 1983), Vol. I, pp. 6-16.
11. H. Trofimenko, *Changing Attitudes Toward Deterrence* (Los Angeles: Center for International and Strategic Affairs, UCLA, ACIS Working Paper No. 25, July 1980), pp. 30-36.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 33. I pointed out the significance of this passage in my paper, *Possible Counterforce Role for the Typhoon* (Alexandria: CNA, Professional Paper 347, March 1982), p. 15.
13. For definitions, see A. A. Sidorenko, "The Nature and Principles of Military-Scientific Research," in P. A. Kurochkin (ed.), *Osnovy voenno-nauchnogo issledovaniya* (Moscow, 1969), p. 37; M. M. Kir'yan and N. I. Reum, "Forecasting in Military Affairs," in N. V. Ogarkov (ed.), *Sovetskaya Voennaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. VI (Moscow, 1978), p. 558. For usage, see K. Chebotarev, "Heavy Industry: The Foundation of the Soviet State's Economic and Military Strength," in P. A. Sidorov and A. D. Aristov (eds.), *Marksizm-leninizm o voyne i armii* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 177-178; B. Yashin and B. Rodionov, "U.S. Naval Forces: the Present and Near Future," *Morskoy sbornik*, No. 2, 1979, pp. 66, 68; A. Gontaev, "Beijing's Military Preparations," *Ibid.*, no. 5, 1981, p. 89; G. A. Trofimenko, "Political Realism and the Strategy of 'Realistic Deterrence'," *SShA: ekonomika*,

*politika, ideologiya*, No. 12, 1971, pp. 3-7; M. A. Mil'shteyn, "At a Dangerous Crossroads," *ibid.*, No. 10, 1978, p. 3; M. Monin, "Behind the Myth of the 'Soviet Threat'," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 9, 1980, p. 47; Fedor Burlatskiy, "A New Strategy? No! Nuclear Madness," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 2 December 1981, p. 14; G. A. Gornostaev, "The U.S. Missile Industry," *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*. No. 4, 1982, p. 77.

14. S. Kozlov, "Military Doctrine and Military Science," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 5, 1964, p. 13; S. N. Kozlov, M. V. Smirnov, I. S. Baz', and P. A. Sidorov, *O sovetskoy voennoy nauke* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1964), p. 387; N. N. Azovtsev, *V.I. Lenin i sovetskaya voennaya nauka* (Moscow, 1971), p. 284; P. A. Sidorov, "Marxist-Leninist Military Theory," in S. N. Kozlov (ed.), *Spravochnik ofitsera* (Moscow, 1971), p. 77.

15. McConnell, *The Soviet Shift in Emphasis from Nuclear to Conventional*, Vol. II, p. 1 and *passim*.

16. G. Svyatov and A. Kokoshin, "Seapower in the Plans of American Strategists," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 3, 1973, pp. 80-81. I discussed this shortly after it appeared, in my paper, "Gorshkov's Doctrine of Coercive Naval Diplomacy in Both Peace and War," in J. M. McConnell, R. G. Weinland, and M. K. McGwire, *Admiral Gorshkov on "Navies in War and Peace"* (Arlington: CNA, CRC 257, 1974), p. 89.

17. *Proceedings*, March 1980, p. 96.

18. The text of the 2 April 1982 interview is available from the Office of the Secretary of the Navy. I have been unable to acquire a copy of the *Uusi Suomi* text, but subsequent Soviet commentary, after the line had changed, showed that the Finnish newspaper had faithfully recorded Lehman's views. See N. Neyland, "Northern Europe: The Fight for a Non-Nuclear Zone," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 5, 1983, p. 118.

19. *APS Daily Review*, 29 April 1982, republished in Joint Publications Research Service, *USSR Report: Military Affairs*, No. 1674 (JPRS 80863, 20 May 1982), p. 4.

20. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Praeger, 1962), p. 64.

21. A. Stokov and I. Maryganov, "On the Underpinnings of Soviet Military Science," in P. A. Sidorov and B. S.

Lyalikov (eds.) *Osovetskoy voennoy nanke: sbornik statey* (Moscow, 1954), p. 58.

22. A. Rumyantsev, "Naval Forces in Pentagon Plans for a 'New' Military Strategy," *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie*. No. 6, 1982, p. 63. See also E. Nikitin, "Threats from the Sea Depths," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 3 July 1984; V. Kuzar', "First-Strike Calibres," *Wovoe vremya*, 6 July 1984, p. 19.

23. Moscow broadcast to Great Britain and Ireland, 2000 GMT 4 December 1982, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 6 December 1982, Vol. III, p. G7.

24. "Hegemonistic Revelations," *Izvestiya*, 3 January 1983, p. 4.

25. N. Shaskol'skiy, "The Pentagon's Oceanic Strategy," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 4 June 1983, p. 5. See also V. Khomenskiy, "Anti-Submarine Warfare," *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie*. No. 1, 1984, pp. 76f.

26. S. Gorshkov, "The Navy: Past and Present," *Voennaya mysl'*, No. 6, 1972, p. 32; S. G. Gorshkov, *Morskaya otoshch' gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1976), p. 461.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

28. S. G. Gorshkov, *Voennno-Morskoy Plot* (Moscow, 1977), p. 36.

29. S. Gorshkov, "Navies in War and Peace," *Morskoy sbornik*, No. 2, 1973, pp. 18-19; Gorshkov, *Morskaya moshch' gosudarstva*, p. 290.

30. Interview with S. G. Gorshkov by APN commentator V. Morozov in *Morning Star* (London), 30 November 1982, p. 2, as reprinted in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 2 December 1982, Vol. III, p. AA10; S. G. Gorshkov, "American Aircraft Carriers—an Instrument of Expansion," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 14 October 1983, p. 4.

31. S. Gorshkov, "Remember the War," *Morskoy sbornik*, No. 5, 1984, p. 6. See also N. Smirnov, "The Motherland's Ocean Guard," *Sovetskoe vo&anoie obozrenie*. No. 7, 1984, p. 3.

32. Anonymous, "Moulding the National-Security Strategy of the R. Reagan Administration," *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*, No. 6, 1982, p. 126.

33. Sturua, "The U.S.—is the Emphasis on an 'Oceanic Strategy'?" *Ibid.*, No. 11, 1982, pp. 39-40.

34. See the early sources quoted in my paper published in George (ed.), op. cit., p. 61. For later sources, see N. I. Morozov, *Ballisticheskie rakety strategicheskogo naznacheniya* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 180, 183; A. Sorokin and E. Makashev, "Nuclear-Powered Missile Submarines," *Tekhnika i vooruzhenie*, No. 7, 1975, p. 47; N. Shaskol'skiy, "A Dangerous Path," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 5, 1976, p. 147; A. N. Latukhin, *Boevye upravlyayemye rakety* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1978), p. 127; V. Pestrov, "U.S. Nuclear Forces," *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 7, 1979, p. 10; V. Flegontev, "Supporting the Combat Action of American SSBNs," *Ibid.*, No. 12, 1979, pp. 69-70, 74; R. Simonyan, "In Expectation of Military Superiority," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 22 August 1980; M. Arkhipov, "The Development of Strategic Nuclear Weapons by the U.S. after World War II," *Vdenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal*, No. 2, 1981, p. 71; K. Stalbo, "The Strategic Strike Force," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 3 September 1981, p. 3; A. Fedorov, "The U.S.—a Nuclear Threat to Peace," *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 3, 1982, p. 6; Yu. Nikitin, "Threat from the Sea Depths," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 29 June 1984, p. 3.

35. Sturua, *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*, No. 11, 1982, p. 39. I have previously treated Sturua's article in *The Soviet Shift in Emphasis from Nuclear to Conventional*, Vol. II, p. 38.

36. For previous articles by Kuz'min in *Morskoy sbornik*, see "Reconnaissance in Combat Action for Destroying an Opponent's Naval Forces," No. 5, 1964; "Reconnaissance in Support of Cruise-Missile Firings," No. 4, 1978; "Reconnaissance in Blockade Action at Sea," No. 12, 1978; "Searching Out Nuclear-Powered Missile Submarines," No. 5, 1979.

37. Kuz'min, "Submarine Noise and Anti-Submarine Warfare," *ibid.*, No. 9, 1982, pp. 67-68.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

39. See, for example, N. Kharlamov, "On Certain Trends in Naval Development," *Voennaya mysl'*, No. 10, 1967, p. 65; N. Vyunenkov, "On Certain Trends in the Development of Naval Tactics," *Morskoy sbornik*, No. 10, 1975, p. 22.

40. B. Konovalov, "Ocean Watch," *Izvestiya*, 29 July 1981, p. 3.

41. K. J. Moore, Mark Flanigan, and Robert D. Helsel, "Developments in Submarine Systems, 1956-76," in MccGwire and McDonnell (eds.), op. cit., pp. 170-173; Robert P. Berman and John C. Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces: Requirements and Responses* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1982), pp. 57-58, 128-129.

42. L. Bezymenskiy, "Is it Necessary to Bang One's Fist on the Table?," *Novoe vremya*. No. 17 (20 April), 1984, p. 27.

43. S. G. Gorshkov, *Morskaya nosnch' gosudarstva* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1979), p. 339.

# Glossary

ATP	Advanced Technology Panel
BOGSAT	Theorizing, conceptualizing, brainstorming
C <sup>3</sup> CM	Command, control, and communications countermeasures
CINCLANT	Commander in Chief, Atlantic Command
CNA	Center for Naval Analyses
COCOM	Combatant command
CVBGs	Carrier battle groups
HUMINT	Human intelligence
IRIN	Islamic Republic of Iran Navy
IRGCN	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence
SABER	Surface Analysis Branch for Evaluation and Reporting
SCI	Sensitive compartmented information
SIGINT	Signals intelligence
SSBN	Ballistic missile submarine
SLMB	Submarine launched ballistic missile
SLOCs	Sea Lines of Communication

SPEAR	Strike Projection Evaluation and Antiair Research
SWORD	Submarine Warfare Operations Research Division
TECHINT	Technical intelligence



COP-2013-U-005622-Final



4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311-1850 703-824-2000 [www.cna.org](http://www.cna.org)